

7 1/2 Reasons...

Why Brands Should Monitor Their Digital Footprints



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The Internet has changed the world of information sharing significantly. People you would have never imagined could be target influencers for your product or service are now more important than traditional communication providers. Instead of being centered with a few, information now flows freely and through many. A customer in Woodstock, Georgia has as much Internet power as one in New York City. Never before has word of mouth advertising been more important to your organization's (and your own) well-being.

Thanks to social networks, blogs, video and image sharing, Twitter, instant messenger, text, email and a proliferation of other real time communication tools, information is disseminated faster, lasts longer, reaches more places and has more impact than any other medium. That's not to say you should abandon radio, print and television. All I am saying is that digital foot printing (internet marketing) should be an important part of the advertising/marketing mix.

Here's why. Other people are laying down digital footprints for you and some may not be flattering or accurate. The more you counteract these negative messages with positive ones, the more balanced your story. The bigger brands tend to have more messages, but even medium and small size companies need to know what is being said about them, who is saying it and why. Even more importantly, you need to know if anyone is actually even talking about your company.

That is where monitoring comes in. Here are 7 ½ reasons why you should have an active digital footprint-monitoring program:

1. **Influencer relations:** Learn who is talking about you and how big their reach is so you can provide them with accurate information. This is no different from media relations, except the number of influencers will be much bigger.
2. **Prospect Targeting:** Find out who is listening and commenting to what your influencers are saying about you. People who engage are interested and maybe close to making a decision to buy. You may also find new demographic or psychographic groups interested in your product or service.
3. **Internet Branding:** Measure the quantity and quality of your digital footprint to determine your level of internet branding. Determine the word of mouth effectiveness of a promotion, new product, advertising or other marketing initiative.
4. **Customer Relations:** Learn what customers are saying so you can fix problems and capitalize on opportunities.
5. **Competitive Analysis:** See what people are saying about your competition so you can identify marketing opportunities.



6. **Target advertising:** Increase the effectiveness of your online advertising by learning which sites and blogs are attracting and engaging more of your target demographic.
7. **Employee Relations:** Many of your employees participate on social networks and some are making comments about work. These comments may be good or they may be not so good. Either way, comments from employees give you some insight into attitudes that can affect your business.
- 7½. **Copyright Infringement:** The internet is rife with copyright infringement. The problem is the internet is so large it is difficult to make a determination of intellectual asset theft. A digital footprint monitoring program can help you identify these thefts and allow you to stop them.

Here are three ways you can implement a digital footprint-monitoring program:

- 1- *If you are a very small organization, you can use search engines, blog libraries and participation in social networks to monitor your digital footprints.*
- 2- *If you are a medium to large size company, you should engage a monitoring service and a company to help you analyze the data.*
- 3- *Medium to large companies should also engage within social networks as monitoring services cannot review information that is password protected.*

The benefits of monitoring your digital footprints far outreach the costs. It is important to learn what your market is saying so you can head off problems and take advantage of opportunities.

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